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Global Issues Honors Consortium

Summary: UMM has joined the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Tougaloo College in Mississippi and Dillard University in New Orleans to create the Global Issues Honors Consortium, established with a major grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

(May 3, 2006)-The University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) has joined the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Tougaloo College in Mississippi and Dillard University in New Orleans to create the Global Issues Honors Consortium (GIHC). The GIHC aims to increase the number of highly qualified, well-prepared students of color in graduate and professional programs in a variety of fields and with an international focus. The consortium is being established with a major grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Over the next four years, three cohorts of students chosen from the partner institutions will participate in the GIHC—a total of about 64 students. The first cohort of students for the honors program will be selected in the fall of 2006. The ultimate goal is that students of African descent, American, Native American, Latino and Asian American students who complete the honors program will be among the next generation of activists, policymakers, scholars and public intellectuals addressing challenges that face the world's marginalized people.

Judy Kuechle, UMM's interim vice chancellor for academic affairs and academic dean, stated, "Participation in the Global Issues Honors Program will provide unique learning opportunities for our students through seminars, workshops and study abroad experiences. This is a wonderful cohort program for UMM students who will gain academically and professionally."

Bart Finzel, associate professor of economics and head of the UMM Honors Program, is the GIHC campus director at Morris. "The GIHC brings to the UMM Honors Program an exciting curriculum in global issues and community based learning," Finzel said. "It also provides a wonderful opportunity for us to add diversity to our Honors Program by creating a clear mechanism within it for students of color to realize their post-UMM aspirations."

Faculty and administrators at consortium institutions are collaborating to provide students in the program a range of experiences, including:

Academic seminars on their home campuses

Mentoring and instruction in critical thinking

Graduate school preparation

An intensive summer workshop at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

A community service learning project

A study abroad experience
Student presentations of original research and writing projects

The GIHC will build upon the successes of more than a decade of earlier honors program collaborations between the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and several other institutions — first, Chicago State University then, Morris Brown College in Atlanta and most recently Morehouse College and other Atlanta University Center schools. More than 100 students have completed these previous global issues honors programs, which have been supported by the Mellon Foundation since 2002.

Clarissa Myrick-Harris, national director of the GIHC, noted that the new program will continue a tradition, yet have its own unique personality. “Each of the four universities in this consortium brings an institutional culture with complementary attributes and strengths that will contribute to advancing the goals of the program. UMM has a strong tradition of addressing the needs of students of color in ways that simultaneously connect them to the world and keep them grounded in their heritage, culture and communities.”

In addition to Faculty Coordinator Finzel, Sonia Hidalgo-Núñez in the Spanish program, Argie Manolis and Rich Heyman in the English discipline, all at UMM, will serve as instructors and faculty mentors for UMM students in the GIHC. Fang Du is serving as the UMM administrative coordinator for the Consortium. Tap Payne, professor of theatre arts at UMM, has been actively involved in establishing the consortium as well.

Recruitment of students for the honors program started in mid-April. In October 2006, the GIHC institutions will select a small group of students on each campus for the program’s first cohort. The orientation workshop for students and faculty in the consortium will be held in New Orleans at Dillard University in early November. The first seminar will start concurrently at the consortium institutions in Spring 2007. During the school year, students on the four campuses will connect through a virtual learning community and distance learning video conferencing.

For more information on the Global Issues Honors Consortium contact UMM Faculty Coordinator Bart Finzel at (320) 589-6195 or finzelbd@morris.umn.edu. To download the GIHC application materials visit www.icgc.umn.edu.

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